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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
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Annual report to the Economic and Social Council***

Summary

The present report, which is prepared annually, covers a range of issues arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and provides the perspective of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on these topics of system-wide interest. It describes UNICEF actions to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to respond to the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. It provides information about the direction UNICEF is taking to work in closer partnership with other members of the United Nations system to ensure that development assistance produces sustainable results for children.

This report, together with an addendum containing the comments made by the members of the Executive Board during its first regular session of 2007, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2007.

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*** This document was submitted late because of internal consultations.

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I. Introduction

1. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will only be possible with special efforts to reach the 49 per cent of the developing world's population who are children. UNICEF took numerous steps in 2006 to ensure that this will happen, by putting more emphasis on partnerships; by increasingly integrating its programmes; and by working more effectively and efficiently, especially through harmonized work with other parts of the United Nations. Such strategic, inclusive approaches are the path to measurable and sustainable results.

Partnerships

2. The scope of the Millennium Development Goals and its related targets is so great that one of the most critical roles of UNICEF is to deepen its alliances with others whose work will affect children, and to engage other collaborators for children both in the field and in policy dialogues.

3. New partnerships were created to "Unite for Children" and ongoing partnerships were deepened and broadened. UNICEF continues to work with, contribute to and provide leadership in major global organizations and coalitions that share a focus on children, including the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Roll Back Malaria; Health Metric Network; the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. To address the needs of 146 million undernourished children under five years of age, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) have collaborated with the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition and other partners in shaping the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative, which focuses on Millennium Development Goal 1, to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and undernutrition. The Executive Director also participated in the Clinton Global Initiative and in the World Economic Forum in Davos, joining with others to place the concerns of children in the centre of the global agenda.

4. In the area of sports, the Executive Director initiated the "Unite for Children, Unite for Peace" campaign with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) at the opening of the World Cup in June 2006. This campaign took advantage of a global spotlight on sports to promote nonviolence, tolerance and peace for children and for all. In addition, at the second regular session of the Executive Board in September, Fútbol Club Barcelona expanded its philanthropic tradition to address the problems of children affected by HIV/AIDS. And in the United States, the National Basketball Association launched a public service campaign in support of "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS", which was launched in 2005 with participation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AID and other United Nations agencies.

5. Partnerships with children and young people continue to be an important means for UNICEF and other agencies to include the most direct and most immediate perspectives on programme directions. At the "Junior 8" youth forum held in conjunction with the G8 Summit in July in Saint Petersburg, the Executive Director interacted with youth delegates from the eight member countries, who then presented their recommendations to the G8 leaders. Another major process during the year depended greatly on young people's involvement and perspectives. The

United Nation Study on Violence against Children, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Save the Children Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, reached out to children who had experienced violence through nine regional forums. Children contributed their insights and participated in the preparation of recommendations for the study. In addition, children and young people — helped by Save the Children — played a large part in producing a special children's version of the report and an educational booklet designed to provide children and young people over the age of 12 years with information about violence and ideas for actions they can take to prevent and respond to violence. It is clear that this innovative involvement of children throughout, from preparation to published materials, contributed to the success and usefulness of the study.

Greater programme integration

6. Another UNICEF strategy for increasing the effectiveness of its programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goals involves greater integration of programmes so that results are mutually reinforcing. In West Africa, UNICEF is scaling up a community-based programme known as the Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) programme, which combines high-impact health and nutrition interventions and which has resulted in significant decreases in pilot districts of as much as 20 per cent in child mortality in only two years. UNICEF will use this model for results-driven strategies in other sectors and regions, and is sharing it widely with other partners.

7. Over the course of the year, UNICEF also continued to strengthen its partnerships within, and to harmonize its work processes with, other parts of the United Nations system. Many of these results are detailed in the following sections.

A. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

8. The seventh pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework took place in January 2006. Details were provided in the annual report to the Executive Board, presented at the annual session of 2006 (E/ICEF/2006/11).

9. For the current year, as of 30 September 2006, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $452.5 million from government donors and intergovernmental agencies against medium-term financial plan projections of $488 million. Total regular resources income from all sources for 2006 is projected to be $962 million, with the level of government regular resources contributions in line with financial plan estimates. Other resources contributions recorded from Governments were $886 million. Of this, $614 million went to other resources-regular against a financial plan of $581 million, while $272 million went to other resources-emergency against a financial plan of $394 million. Total other resources income from all sources was $1,338 million, against the 2006 plan target of $1,403 million.

10. UNICEF requires a predictable, long-term and increased base of core resources to enhance effectiveness and to better engage partner countries in capacity development, technical advice and a normative agenda in a systematic and responsive manner. UNICEF encourages all Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to core resources and, for those in a position to do so, to

provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board.

B. Capacity-building

11. National capacity development continues to be a key focus of UNICEF cooperation. In a trend that is continuing as part of the 2006-2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), the organization is making a gradual and relative shift from an approach that is based mainly on support to project implementation to one that is more strategic, policy-oriented and focused on support to national programmes and partner institutions, including strengthening their systems and capacities to scale up basic service delivery.

12. One of the major areas in which UNICEF has engaged in capacity-building is through technical and financial support provided to the implementation of national-level household surveys, especially the multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS). The MICS have become the single most important source of data for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, as they provide data on more than half of the indicators for the Goals. MICS currently are being conducted in 54 countries.

13. To meet the increased demand for data at more frequent intervals, MICS will be conducted every three years rather than every five years. This will provide a solid and more up-to-date statistical base for national partners to use to improve their programme planning and policy formulation. The data derived from MICS are a critically important source of information for both national and global tracking of progress toward a range of international goals and targets, including the forthcoming assessment of progress towards the goals established by the General Assembly Special Session On Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, in September 2007, as well as the Abuja Targets on malaria, and the General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. In this way, more frequent surveys will lead to more accurate planning, more effective programming and, therefore, to measurable results for children.

14. In 2006, a new version of *DevInfo* was released with UNICEF support. This new version operates both as a desktop application and on the internet. To support users of this new version, since May 2006 workshops are under way to reach professionals from United Nations agencies, government statistical offices, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, representing 120 countries. Eighty countries have now adopted the *DevInfo* technology to support their national socio-economic database.

15. Urban Info, a customized version of *DevInfo* developed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), was launched at the World Urban Forum in June 2006. Another *DevInfo* adaptation, Millennium Development Goals Info 2006, was presented at the General Assembly in September 2006. It contains the official Millennium Development Goals data set published by the United Nations Statistics Division in coordination with all other United Nations agencies. Since September 2006, the United Nations System Avian Influenza Coordinator's office has adopted the *DevInfo* database system to monitor the global situation of the H5N1 virus. The system will help with quick and efficient data collection and support both global and national teams to formulate effective preparedness and response plans to the virus.

16. EmergencyInfo, a powerful decision support system based on *DevInfo* database technology, was developed with UNICEF support to bridge information gaps within the first days of an emergency and provide support for rapid data collection, situation assessment, standard monitoring reports and disaster preparedness. By combining the advanced data access and presentation features of *DevInfo* and making it accessible on handheld digital devices, it will help humanitarian agencies to respond faster and more accurately in emergencies.

17. A new enhanced website (www.devinfo.org) offers access to information about *DevInfo* implementation and provides a forum for the global sharing of experiences in the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals using this technology.

18. UNICEF has also supported thematic south-south cooperation. This has been especially important over the course of the past year in the area of HIV and AIDS. Brazil, for example, has reached out to Bolivia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Paraguay, San Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste to expand care and support to children, adolescents and pregnant women affected by HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. Among the main outputs for this cooperation have been the sharing of experiences, supplies of antiretroviral drugs and test kits, and capacity-building for health professionals.

C. Transaction costs and efficiency

19. In the area of financial management, reforms made over the past three years have created new efficiencies. The benefits of other work now in progress will be available in the near future. All of these efforts are being done in close collaboration with other funds, programmes and agencies.

20. The integrated enterprise resource planning system implemented in 1999 has continued to bring new efficiencies in the areas of financial management, with benefits at the headquarters and field levels and for donors, development partners and staff. There is a seamless system for financial transactions from New York to the smallest field office, which is updated every 10 hours and handles more than 10 million transactions per year from 234 sites and in 147 currencies. With this system, UNICEF operationally closed its financial books of accounts for 2005 by the end of January 2006, four months earlier than the previous biennium and the earliest it has ever been done. As a result, accurate financial reports to government partners and donors were generated from early February with a ripple effect of efficiencies. Concomitant with this, field offices now have increased authority in the area of payments to partners and in administering their support budgets.

21. In the area of human resources administration, including payroll, the SAP human resources module has been in place since mid-2005. This system is now being extended to regional offices, including any co-located country offices, enabling more rapid and accurate input of data.

22. In 2006, UNICEF harmonized its cost-recovery policies with those of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) members, making it much easier for partners, both donors and programme countries, to plan programmes and encourage partnerships. The harmonization of other financial practices among the funds and programmes has accelerated, with benefits for all parts of the system and for partners. The harmonized approach to cash transfers has now been launched and a

simplified means of transferring funds to partners is now available to all UNICEF field offices. A roll-out of this harmonized policy by the United Nations country team (UNCT) members is under way.

23. Discussions are under way among the funds and programmes in a number of other areas. Now that basic financial reporting has been harmonized, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF are looking at revising the presentations of their biennial support budgets in a results-based format. When this is done, all of the UNICEF budget will be results-based, as 85 per cent of the UNICEF budget is already results-based with a results framework in the country programmes linked to the focus areas of the MTSP and national priorities based on the Millennium agenda. In addition, the Comptrollers of the United Nations, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP are discussing the creation of one standard set of Financial Rules and Regulations. This will facilitate the adoption in 2010 of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), for which work is well under way to ensure shared interpretations and strategies. The adoption of IPSAS will further strengthen a coherent approach in financial management throughout the United Nations.

24. The first United Nations joint office has been established in Cape Verde, and the UNDG Executive Committee agencies currently are undertaking a review to identify its benefits, including any demonstrated efficiencies in administration, management and programme effectiveness, which have been brought about by the common country programme. UNICEF continues, with the other funds and programmes, to work for common premises by regularly reviewing proposed and active shared premises. UNICEF also works closely with a network of United Nations organizations to increase efficiencies in administrative procedures, finding areas for common services. One example is harmonizing travel processes and procedures, where UNICEF has taken steps to simplify its procedures in ways that conform with best practices in other agencies.

D. Coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities for development

25. The report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence had just been issued at the time of finalization of the present report. UNICEF was engaged in the discussions held by the Panel, both bilaterally and as part of the consultations organized in various locations. It is clear that the directions expected to be proposed by the Panel are consistent with the work already being carried out as part of the ongoing reforms of the UNDG, Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination machinery, and the implementation of the previous triennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF will continue to work in these areas and, pending decisions by the inter-agency and intergovernmental bodies on the implementation of reforms stemming from the Panel's report, will report to the Executive Board in accordance with the established mechanisms as well as any new ones that may be established.

26. The cost-recovery policy mentioned in paragraph 22 above is facilitating the ability of UNICEF to collaborate with partners, including through participation in joint United Nations programmes. These programmes are now done in the context of

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Thirty-eight UNDAFs were completed in 2006, bringing the total to date to 112. The guidelines for Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNDAFs have now been used for four years, and the circulation of experienced senior staff and improved training have helped country teams use these instruments more effectively for their planning. One measure of this is that UNDAFs are increasingly commonly directly related to national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies (PRSs).

27. Originally, the UNDAF was to be based on the needs identified by the CCA, but there has been an increase in nationally-produced analyses, usually associated with a PRS. Therefore, the requirement for a CCA has evolved and in some cases, country teams and national partners have agreed that a separate CCA would be duplicative. This trend needs to be monitored to ensure that the national analysis adequately covers such areas of concern as human rights and child protection. UNCTs are also involved in Joint Assistance Strategies, which integrate the support strategies of all (signatory) donors and agencies, in countries where they have been developed, including Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

28. An evaluation of the role and quality of UNDAFs carried out for the UNDG during 2006 concluded that UNDAFs have become more focused over the past years, that the United Nations in the field is now better aligned with national processes and that UNDAFs have strengthened the United Nations' collective identity and team-building. At the same time, the transaction costs of the UNDAF process are still high. The United Nations is not yet fully reflecting new aid modalities in its work and there is scope for the United Nations to better exploit its comparative advantage in programming. The current revision of the CCA/UNDAF guidelines is taking these findings into account.

29. The planning of country programmes involves the preparation and approval of cumulative documentation from the CCA (in most cases), the UNDAF and, based on the UNDAF and for each agency, a country programme document (CPD) for approval by the Executive Board and a country programme action plan (CPAP). In order to streamline this process, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP prepared a common proposal that was initially presented to the UNICEF Executive Board at the annual session in June. The proposal was that one single document be prepared which would incorporate elements of the CCA, UNDAF, CPD and CPAP. A portion of this would be presented to the Executive Boards for approval, as CPDs are currently. The proposals were not fully adopted by the respective Executive Boards. Efforts to streamline the planning process and increasing the coherence of United Nations programmes will continue in 2007.

30. The Regional Directors of the UNDG Executive Committee agencies and of other agencies and organizations have met with increasing frequency to support the ability of country teams as they cooperate with national partners to deliver development results. The Regional Directors' Team in Southern Africa, which was started to support UNCT responses to the "triple threat" of HIV, food insecurity and governance problems, has continued to mature. The team now covers both Southern and Eastern Africa and has a full Programme Support Group which coordinates responses to UNCT requests for support. The Latin America and Caribbean region also has a very active Regional Directors' Team that is supporting the development of CCAs and UNDAFs, resolving implementation issues and supporting the development of UNCTs. There is now agreement that a regional hub should be

established in Panama, to increase the ability of regional staff to support country teams. All Regional Directors' Teams were requested to make a joint assessment of the performance of Resident Coordinators in 2005. For some countries, a "180-degree assessment" tool was introduced on a pilot basis, through which the members of a UNCT provide an opinion of other UNCT members, including the Resident Coordinator. The assessment meetings have been frank, constructive and useful to the UNDP Regional Directors in making a more balanced report on Resident Coordinator performance to the chair of the UNDG.

31. UNICEF fully supports the enhancement of the role of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator as an objective leader of a UNCT who speaks for the United Nations with one voice. As a result of strong encouragement from the Executive Director, an additional four UNICEF staff have been appointed as Resident Coordinators, bringing to nine the number of UNICEF staff who are currently serving as Resident Coordinators. An additional UNICEF staff member is serving as a deputy Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. This brings to 18 the number of UNICEF staff who have ever served as Resident Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General or deputy Resident Coordinators.

E. Evaluation of operational activities

32. As noted in last year's report, evaluations in the United Nations system are being strengthened by inter-agency collaboration. In this regard, a Tsunami Evaluation Coalition of 40 organizations, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and WHO, has prepared a consolidated document which assessed the impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on local and national capacities, the role of needs assessment, the coordination of international humanitarian assistance, the links between relief, rehabilitation and development, and the funding of the tsunami response. UNICEF was a member of the Coalition's core management group.

33. A Real-Time Evaluation Initiative is now under way to agree on an inter-agency approach for real-time evaluation of humanitarian actions. UNICEF has prepared a concept paper for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia) formed the first pilot case.

34. In the area of evaluation, UNICEF is taking steps to prepare for the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (TCPR). UNICEF is leading the task group of the United Nations Evaluation Group on country-led evaluation. A first pilot is under way in South Africa. The exercise consists in assessing from a country perspective the contribution of the United Nations and other external support. UNICEF, with UNDP, is co-leading an assessment of the quality of the current UNDAFs. The findings will be included in the TCPR report to be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007.

35. UNICEF is gathering lessons and good practices from the ACSD programme through systematic weekly updates, regional network meetings, country annual reports and independent evaluations. The knowledge generated through these processes is used to formulate policies and update strategies in real time for ACSD.

UNICEF is also working to develop more general knowledge management strategies for widespread and decentralized application in UNICEF programmes. This will help to develop and document a strong evidence base to improve both implementation and policy advocacy in all programmes.

F. Gender mainstreaming

36. UNICEF continues to seek innovative approaches to reaching Millennium Development Goal 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, by infusing its programmes with a gender perspective as part of the human rights-based approach to programming. UNICEF is also taking steps to improve gender balance within the organization.

37. All country offices have been asked to undertake a gender self-assessment and review of UNICEF-assisted country programmes during the programme cycle, using the specific gender assessment tools available in the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. UNICEF currently is conducting an organization-wide evaluation to assess implementation of the policy on gender equality and women's rights adopted in 1994 as well as implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004 on the TCPR.

38. UNICEF is an active member of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, which aims to strengthen accountability for gender equality among UNCTs. As noted in this report last year, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNICEF conducted a study on the extent to which gender equality is reflected in the latest generation of CCA/UNDAFs. The review showed that the link between analysis and corresponding action and investment in gender equality remains weak, and noted that UNCTs have demonstrated insufficient capacity to undertake holistic, rights-based programming for gender equality and women's empowerment. The review proposed launching a process through which self-selected UNCTs would generate replicable means of undertaking rights-based, change-oriented programming to increase the capacity of government and civil society to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This process will be well-documented and best practices would be disseminated widely for adoption by other countries. This recommendation was endorsed in June 2006 by the Executive Heads of the UNDG Executive Committee and the initiative will be led by UNICEF and UNIFEM.

39. For many years, United Nations agencies have been presenting individual reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the status of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in areas falling within the scope of their activities. The Committee has recently requested United Nations entities to explore means of enhancing the flow of information from the United Nations system to the Committee. As planned, UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA, UNIFEM and WHO, presented a joint report to the Committee at its thirty-fourth session dealing with reproductive health and violence for four countries: Cambodia, Eritrea, Mali and Thailand. The report for Eritrea was prepared by the UNCT. This practice was subsequently expanded at the Committee's thirty-sixth session, at which another six reports were prepared by UNCTs, and will continue at the thirty-seventh session. The Committee expressed its appreciation for this coordinated and comprehensive

presentation of information. These are the first instances of UNCTs preparing a report to a treaty body and this precedent is under consideration as a best practice for adoption by other such bodies.

40. The Legislative Reform Initiative which UNICEF is conducting continues to produce programming tools to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through comprehensive, holistic and participatory legislative reforms, and the development of a rights-based legislative framework. UNICEF is also developing a handbook to serve as a reference on harmonizing national legislation with international instruments, particularly these two Conventions, to be used by legislators, parliamentarians, jurists, lawyers, judges, line ministries, government officials, human rights and children's rights advocates and policymakers.

41. UNICEF continues to work at national, provincial and community levels to prevent gender-based violence in conflict situations and to respond to the needs of survivors in emergency situations.

42. UNICEF has participated in the creation and dissemination of field guidelines and tools for implementation of existing policies, and has promoted inter-agency collaboration in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies. The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings are now ready for field testing.

43. UNICEF, as co-chair of the ECHA-Executive Committees on Peace and Security Working Group on Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel, has finalized the drafting of the Secretary-General's Strategy on Victim Assistance, which is due for discussion by the General Assembly in 2007.

44. UNICEF is committed to attaining the United Nations system-wide goal of gender parity in staffing at all levels by 2010. The report of a study on gender imbalance in UNICEF, presented to the Global Management Team in January 2006, indicated that steady progress has been made and that UNICEF ranks among the top three United Nations agencies in terms of gender parity (46 per cent). However, gender imbalance at the senior levels has been quite persistent. The study concluded that gender parity can be achieved by 2010 if senior management takes a clear and accountable lead, models the desired management culture and invests in human resources management.

45. The Executive Director moved quickly to address these recommendations. She appointed a Special Adviser for Gender and Diversity to report on follow-up to the recommendations and attainment of the goals laid out in the report. She ensured that the steering committee and its reference group which support the comprehensive organizational review are gender balanced. She has established a policy that one half of all committee members should be women. She requested that the organizational review and the supporting strategic review of human resources management incorporate the findings of the gender report in their work.

46. Further progress has been seen in the implementation of the first-ever Senior Staff Review and Rotation Exercise, which was initiated by the Executive Director. Positive action was taken to increase the gender balance in senior management and

there was an increase in the number of female staff at the D-2 level from 19 per cent in 2005 to 30 per cent in September 2006.

47. The global action plan for implementation of the gender parity study is in place. It is derived from a strategy of policy commitment, qualitative and quantitative measurement, institutionalized human resources management procedures and an organizational culture of respect and accommodation. The plan proposes action in six key areas: recruitment; retention; talent development; work culture; accountability; and monitoring and reporting.

48. Managers will be accountable for the action plan. The Special Advisor, Gender and Diversity, supported by a review group, will be the advocate and link for monitoring the implementation of the plan and will report periodically on progress to the Global Management Team.

II. Follow-up to international conferences and panels

49. The commitments set out in the final document of the General Assembly Special Session on Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, are being implemented in the context of follow-up to other major international conferences and summits. Notable among them are the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development, both held in 2002. The goals of *A World Fit for Children* are also firmly grounded in the resolutions of the 2005 World Summit and the 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS.

50. The four major goal areas of *A World Fit for Children* strongly reinforce the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The building of a world fit for children would be a major step in fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Summit of 2000.

51. Some 177 countries are now engaged in follow-up activities to the Special Session on Children which include incorporating the goals of *A World Fit for Children* into their planning processes, either by developing National Plans of Action on children's issues (NPAs) or by integrating the goals into mainstream national plans and/or PRSs. Several countries have used both mechanisms. In some countries, subnational follow-up has been a major focus of activity, including the development of provincial or local plans of action.

52. There is also increased attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The majority of NPAs make reference to the Convention or to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the respective state party reports. Other human rights instruments, such as International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment and ILO Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are also increasingly recognized as part of the framework for NPAs. Almost all the NPAs prepared since the Special Session anticipate the need to review national legislation in relation to the provisions of the Convention. A number also propose strategies to increase the attention given to the views of children.

53. A total of 47 countries had completed NPAs by end of 2005, an increase from 25 in 2003. In addition, 99 countries had incorporated the goals of *A World Fit for*

Children into national development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies by end of 2005, an increase from 68 in 2003. These goals are also explicitly targeted in sectoral plans of 90 countries.

54. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to convene a commemorative plenary meeting in 2007, devoted to the follow-up to the outcome and the progress made in implementing the Declaration and the Plan of Action, based on a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General. UNICEF was asked to prepare and disseminate information on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. UNICEF is now working closely with Governments to support their reviews of progress. Because they are so closely linked, national reporting may take the form of a distinct section of the national report on the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. This work is taking place through local UNICEF offices, National Committees for UNICEF and UNCTs.

55. UNICEF actively participated in the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006 and played a fundamental role in ensuring the visibility of the situation and rights of the girl child. As the Commission's fifty-first session in early 2007 will focus on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, UNICEF is a central partner of the Division of Advancement of Women in the preparations and will support participation from country offices and young people from all regions. UNICEF has worked closely with the Division, the NGO Committee on UNICEF, the Working Group on Girls and the Innocenti Research Centre in organizing the expert group meeting that will feed into the Secretary-General's report on the girl child to the Commission. The report of the expert group meeting is being translated into a youth-friendly version by UNICEF for discussion and sharing with young people.

Conclusion

56. A culture of continual improvement is being established at UNICEF, in harmony with the processes of United Nations reform. UNICEF has reached out to other partners, within and outside the United Nations system, more inclusively and more dynamically over the past year. Steps are being made in knowledge management so that best practices, programme data and evaluation results are shared and used for programme adaptations.

57. This is leading to more efficient and effective programming and advocacy for children, and to the creation of measurable results. This is essential to reaching the Millennium Development Goals and the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. In doing so, UNICEF is fully working in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration laid out by the TCPR by continuing to improve its effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact.